



June 21, 2006



Jury convicts Providence man of gun offense

A federal jury has convicted **Robert Taylor**, 27, of Providence, of being a felon in possession of a firearm. The jury found that Taylor had a handgun stashed between the front seats of an SUV in March 2005.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the guilty verdict, which the jury returned yesterday after a one-day trial and about two hours of deliberation. A previous trial, held last month, ended in a mistrial when the jury failed to reach a verdict after about two days of deliberation.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee H. Vilker presented evidence that, on March 19, 2005, Providence Police officers assigned to the Gun Task Force approached an SUV parked in a lot in the Manton Heights housing development. Taylor was in the driver's seat.

As Officer Thomas Zincone spoke with Taylor, he noticed him use hand and body movements to shield something next to the driver's seat. At Officer Zincone's request, Taylor stepped out of the vehicle and the officer saw the handle of a gun sticking out from under a towel between the front seats. As Officer Zincone was confirming that the object under the towel was a gun, Taylor started to run but officers tackled him, whereupon he denied that the gun was his.

Taylor has prior felony convictions for drug trafficking and assaulting a federal officer.

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Sentencing is scheduled for September 15. The maximum penalty for being a felon in possession of a firearm is 10 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Following the verdict, Judge Torres ordered Taylor detained. He had been free on bond while awaiting trial.

Providence Police and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Vilker prosecuted it as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, ATF, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and gun offenders have been sentenced to a total of more than 700 years in federal prison.

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